

REMARKS

The Office Action dated July 1, 2009 has been received and reviewed. This response is directed to that action.

Claims 1-16 and 22 have been amended, and claim 21 has been cancelled. The subject matter of claim 21 has been incorporated into claim, and claims dependent therefrom. No new matter has been added.

The applicants respectfully request reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections- 35 U.S.C. §102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 8-13 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Lee et al. (US 2001/006936 A1); and claims 22-24 as anticipated by Duffield (GB 2,374,830). The applicants believe these rejections have been rendered moot by the amendments to claims 1 and 22, whereby the limitations of former claim 21 were incorporated into the claims. Accordingly, the applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw these rejections.

Claim Rejections- 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5-7, 14-15 and 18-21 as obvious over Duffield in view of Corradini (GB 2,379,214). The applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

The applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is not obvious over Duffield in view of Corradini because the teachings of Duffield are not enabling such that

a person of skill in the art would not apply the teachings of this reference in order to achieve the presently claimed invention. In particular, the applicants submit that Duffield is non-enabling with respect to the water content of the water softening composition. Duffield states that the water content of the composition is "less than or more than 5% total or free water" (page 6, line 23). This range, less than or more than, is meaningless to the skilled artisan. In real terms, all this suggests is that the composition may or may not contain water. It suggests absolutely nothing. Moreover, the "total or free water" also has no meaning within Duffield—what is free water, and should it be considered part of the total or is it separate? A person of ordinary skill in the art would not know what to make of this, and consequently, would not use the teachings of this reference as motivation for achieving the present invention.

The presently claimed invention provides a unit-dose water softening agent in a three-dimensional form that is visually pleasing to the user. This is achieved by using a water-softening composition according to the present claims, wherein the water content is less than 35%. This is in direct contrast to the containers known in the prior art at the time of the present invention, as they generally required a high water content in order to give the container a "fuller" and more attractive appearance. Indeed, immediately after preparation, containers of the prior art appear limp and unattractive, and the water in the composition is necessary to shrink the container material around the liquid composition to provide the attractive appearance. There is nothing in the prior art, therefore, that suggests lowering the water content as in the presently claimed invention.

Moreover, there is nothing in Corradini that remedies the deficiencies described hereinabove.

Based on the foregoing reasons, the applicants respectfully submit that the presently claimed invention is not obvious over the cited prior art, and respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw these rejections.

The applicants believe the claims are now in condition for allowance, and such favorable action is respectfully requested. If any issues remain, the resolution of which can be advanced through a telephone conference, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicant's attorney at the phone number listed below.

CONDITIONAL PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

If entry and consideration of the amendments above requires an extension of time, Applicant respectfully requests that this be considered a petition therefor. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee(s) due in this connection to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

ADDITIONAL FEE

Please charge any insufficiency of fees, or credit any excess, to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

Respectfully submitted,

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